



CATCHMENT AND COASTAL REEF ADVISORY COMMITTEE (CCRAC) 3rd Meeting – 13 April 2011 – Townsville SUMMARY DOCUMENT

The third meeting of the CCRAC was held in Townsville on 13 April 2011.

The Chairman paid respect to the Traditional Owners and acknowledged their traditional land and sea country in the Townsville region.

A summary of the outcomes of the main items discussed is set out below.

REEF GUARDIAN PROGRAM

The Reef Guardian program is a stewardship recognition program, acknowledging the work being done by various groups to protect the Great Barrier Reef. The program was first introduced into schools in 2002 and then expanded to include councils in 2005.

In signing up for the program, schools and councils develop an action plan, and councils enter into an agreement with the GBRMPA. Pilot programs for Reef Guardian Fishers and Reef Guardian Farmers began in 2010.

The GBRMPA's intention is to ensure that everyone involved in a Reef Guardian group – be it a school, council, farmer, grazier or fisher – is made aware they are part of this larger program. Signage is one component of the program, provided to participants to announce their commitment to the wider community.

BIODIVERSITY STRATEGY FOR THE GREAT BARRIER REEF

Members were provided an update on the progress being made in developing a Biodiversity Strategy for the Great Barrier Reef Ecosystem.

The Committee noted that the Strategy is to be supported by Vulnerability Assessments, and these have been useful in engaging scientists and managers. Members were specifically asked to provide advice on the issue of and the need for targets, recognising that in some instances there is a real lack of data.

The predominant view within the Committee was that the setting of targets was of value, and that:

- They should be high level statements on what we are out to achieve based on the best science.
- They should be outcome focused and used as indicators of progress.

- The priority actions themselves could be considered as targets.
- There should only be a small number.
- The language and audience should be 1) technical, 2) community and 3) political.
- The GBRMPA should get the Strategy out there and work with relevant agencies on the actions and targets that an average person will understand.
- There should be a significant focus on inshore issues including roles, responsibilities and priorities.

RECREATION MANAGEMENT STRATEGY FOR THE GREAT BARRIER REEF MARINE PARK

Members were provided an update on the progress being made in developing a Recreation Management Strategy for the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park.

One member felt that the real future and success in recreation management would come back to the Reef Guardian program. Young children start learning about the Reef in school, retaining the knowledge as they grow older, and sharing that knowledge with family and friends; thereby, effecting change management. The Strategy and the Reef Guardian program are interlinked; the key message is that we have to educate people. There is not enough compliance or enforcement being done; and there is no commercial imperative for operators to change what they are doing.

Members agreed that:

- The challenge was in winning the hearts and minds of people using the Marine Park, especially the younger audience and those using the Marine Park for the first time.
- The bottom line is that people need to have respect for the Reef. Programs like Reef Guardians were important in communicating the need to have respect for the Great Barrier Reef, and this might be included in corporate education and communication plans.
- Monitoring and compliance of how people behave is important, and we should continue to look at how we use new technologies and engage new partners.
- Volunteering was an area where significant progress has been made in engaging more people as eyes and ears out in the field.

Members hoped the document will also have some influence into the Reef Plan in terms of water quality.

DEVELOPMENT OF THE OUTLOOK FOR GREAT BARRIER REEF COASTAL ECOSYSTEMS AND THE GBRMPA'S COASTAL ECOSYSTEMS STRATEGY

As requested at CCRAC 2, members were provided presentations from other major interests in coastal development – Property Council of Australia, Planning Institute of Australia, Regional Development Australia, and Insurance Council of Australia – to provide a better understanding of the context for the GBRMPA's Coastal Ecosystem Strategy and the potential uses of the GBRMPA's Outlook for Great Barrier Reef Coastal Ecosystems. Themes that came out strongly during the presentations included the importance of:

- Strategic planning and the use of land in the future (e.g. fit for purpose).
- Alternative ways of managing risk.
- Rewarding developers for innovative environmentally-friendly building/development design.
- The legacy of past decisions and how we address them.

Members discussed what synergies and points of conflict may exist between the Coastal Ecosystems Strategy and the presentations, and made the following comments:

- Engaging in regional planning processes which involves working with Natural Resource Management (NRM) groups.
- Some of the biodiversity work may be useful.
- Floodplain mapping appears to be missing from the Queensland mapping. Some of the smaller wetland areas, of which we know little about, have not been mapped. However, there is a sense that the community has an understanding of the importance of wetlands.
- The strategy needs to clearly identify what you want people to get out of it.
- In terms of communications, the message needs to clearly state what you want people to get out of the process; however, it is also one of understanding the need for more functional coastal systems. Give the broader picture, but also some take home messages.
- Urban expansion would be a concern in terms of the development of floodplains.
- A customised message could help an individual know what to do, based on certain information. This is a professional skill, however, and would need to be included in the budget.
- It would still be useful to include a message about water quality, and the benefits of water quality to these systems. The wetlands do good things for us, but we still need to give a message of protection.
- Regional plans have only been in existence for a few years, so they are still on a learning curve. However, the more good factual information included in a regional plan the better, as this would assist the government in evaluating applications.

Members were then provided an update on the GBRMPA's actions since CCRAC 2 in implementing its Coastal Ecosystem Strategy (including communication materials), and progress and

outcomes of the assessments undertaken to date in developing its Outlook for Great Barrier Reef Coastal Ecosystems.

The Committee's advice to the GBRMPA was:

- Finalise the documents and start using them in work at regional and catchment scale.
- Provide information on the critical issues at a catchment and regional scale for Great Barrier Reef Coastal Ecosystems (i.e. what functionality is under threat or has been lost).
- Tailor the messages for the anticipated audience (e.g. Australian Government, Ports, Mining and Regional communities). This may require some additional professional skills.
- Timing may dictate priorities (e.g. be opportunistic on when and where to act).
- Consider whether model provision might be useful for inclusion in regional plans.
- Engage with Natural Resource Management (NRM) boards to look for opportunities to leverage Caring for our Country funds.
- While present land use trends potentially show the impacts of recent legislative improvements, this may change in future with proposed infrastructure investments, increasing population and the new mining boom. This means that communication of the importance of maintaining and potentially enhancing functional values is very important.

There were a number of comments on the communication materials, and these comments will be incorporated into the documents with follow-up discussions with key agencies where necessary.

NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the CCRAC is scheduled to be held on 5 and 6 October 2011.

CURRENT MEMBERSHIP OF THE COMMITTEE 2009-2012

Mr Mike Berwick AM	Catchment management and Natural Resource Management (NRM)
Mrs Leith Bouilly	Independent Chairman
Emeritus Professor Valerie Brown AO	Coastal planning
Mr Grahame Byron	Department of the Premier and Cabinet
Mr Rob Cocco	Catchment management and NRM
Mr Dan Galligan	Queensland Farmers Federation (QFF)
Mr Matthew Kealley	Canegrowers
A/Professor Catherine Lovelock	Coastal ecology and climate change
Mr Colin McKenzie	Marine tourism industry
Ms Sheriden Morris	Reef and Rainforest Research Centre (RRRC)
Mr Mark Piorkowski	Local Government Association of Queensland (LGAQ)
Dr John Robertson	Fisheries Queensland, Department of Employment, Economic Development and Innovation (DEEDI)
Mr Robert Speirs	Department of Environment and Resource Management (DERM)
Cr Vern Veitch	Local government, recreational fishing and wetlands
Mr Gary White	Department of Infrastructure and Planning
Supported by:	
Mr Peter McGinnity	General Manager, GBRMPA
Mr Hugh Yorkston	Director, Coastal Ecosystems and Water Quality, GBRMPA